

# Highland SOC Species Focus 2021



Highland SOC are asking for your help with our **Species Focus** this year – a citizen science project for a ‘stay at home’ summer.

Whilst out and about bird watching in Highland, we would like you to pay special attention to two resident bird species –

- **Red-breasted Merganser** and **Crested Tit**

Both species are on RBBP list and Highland holds important breeding populations but surprisingly few actual breeding records. Please submit ALL records of sightings, in addition, please make a note of any signs of **breeding** which you observe. This adds hugely to the value of your sightings.

## Crested Tit

- Records of Crested Tits are especially wanted from the N and W extremes of their range, away from their core areas.

## Red-breasted Merganser

- When identifying Red-breasted Merganser, be careful with similar Goosander. Have a look at this BTO Bird ID video which compares the 2 species  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=7Jo83LevWeE&feature=youtu.be>
- If you see young RB Mergansers, please try to estimate age and size, such as tiny, half-grown or virtually full grown

If you see a pair of RB Mergansers or Cresties in suitable habitat early in the season, please try to revisit later in the season to check for breeding success.

Submit your records online via **BirdTrack** <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/birdtrack> or you can send them in an email to this address [highlandchair@the-soc.org.uk](mailto:highlandchair@the-soc.org.uk) and Carol Miller will enter them for you.

Please include date, location (6 figure grid ref if possible), number of birds and signs of breeding. Check out BTO breeding codes at <https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u36/downloads/breedingcodes.pdf>

- Be careful not to disturb birds during the breeding season – view from a safe distance and do not linger.
- If on holiday somewhere in the Highlands, check out there too and submit your records.
- Let's see if we can make a difference and improve our Highland breeding records of these 2 species.

...and finally, **Thank you!!**